

To the Appropriations Health subcommittee

My name is Charlee Tufts. I am vice-chair of the Connecticut Emergency Medical Service Advisory Board, and I also chair the board's legislative committee.

I am seeking support to maintain the funding of the EMS regional coordinators, who are currently durational employees of DPH's Office of Emergency Medical Services. Originally, these positions were funded as EMS Regional Executive Directors serving the 5 EMS regional councils by DPH until 2007 when state funding was eliminated. In 2007 the Appropriations Committee funded these critical positions through the Tobacco Fund. In 2009 these positions were consolidated into OEMS as regional coordinators and have been funded through the Tobacco Fund since 2009 as durational employees of OEMS. This year's budget has funded these critical positions in the general fund. The regional coordinators provide critical services to OEMS and the EMS community. If they are not funded, the EMS system state-wide will be crippled severely.

The regional EMS coordinators have been integral in advancing the Connecticut emergency medical service (EMS) system towards a standardized portal of entry to the healthcare delivery system. The coordinators serve as ambassadors of the Connecticut Department of Public Health to the EMS field providers, services, and representative groups and committees. A short list of the essential roles they provide that would disappear if not funded:

- They are subject matter experts regarding the EMS statutes and public health code, EMS system configurations, EMS practice, and department regulatory procedures.
- The coordinators have served as an invaluable resource for regulated EMS entities by answering questions and responding to issues in a timely, effective and consistent manner.
- They support the work of various EMS groups and committees:
  - researching issues and matters of interest,
  - identifying areas of need, communicating information internally between members and between different groups, collecting and collating information, helping to build consensus, drafting and revising documents
  - each coordinator works with an average of twelve or more committees, associations or boards in a given month
- They provide invaluable assistance to municipalities in developing their EMS Plans, as required by statute, to assure optimal emergency patient care to their residents.
- They support all EMS services, but are especially important to the volunteer services.

I am attaching a full list of their responsibilities and accomplishments.

Currently, the five coordinators are labelled as "durational" employees. We feel that their background service in EMS and to EMS is of unquantifiable value to the citizens of Connecticut and have propelled the profession forward. However they are funded, through the General Budget or the Tobacco Fund - we ask the Appropriations Committee to consider these positions essential. As you make your difficult budget decisions, please retain these positions and consider the language we are submitting for the implementer bill to make these positions permanent.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

I am attaching documentation of the current services and duties of these 5 coordinators to illustrate how devastating it would be to the system if they are not funded.

#### REGIONAL COORDINATORS ROLE FOR STATEWIDE EMS PATIENT CARE

Purpose: The regional EMS coordinators have been integral in advancing the Connecticut emergency medical service (EMS) system towards a standardized portal of entry to the healthcare delivery system. The coordinators serve as ambassadors of the Connecticut Department of Public Health to the EMS field providers, services, and representative groups and committees. They are subject matter experts regarding the EMS statutes and public health code, EMS system configurations, EMS practice, and department regulatory procedures. As such, the coordinators have served as an invaluable resource for regulated EMS entities by answering questions and responding to issues in a timely, effective and consistent manner. They support the work of various EMS groups and committees by researching issues and matters of interest, identifying areas of need, communicating information internally between members and between different groups, collecting and collating information, helping to build consensus, drafting and revising documents, etc. The coordinators have taken on varied additional roles within the Office of EMS whenever a need has been identified. Some of the specific functions and accomplishments of the coordinators include:

- **Support the Work of Regional Councils, State and Regional EMS Committees**
  - The coordinators have supported, through research, document development and communications, a host of different projects from many local, regional and state EMS committees. On average, each coordinator works with an average of twelve or more committees, associations or boards in a given month.
  - In collaboration with the regional EMS councils and their respective medical advisory committees, the EMS coordinators continuously work to update the operational, administrative and regional patient care guidelines and have developed at least one BLS-only version of the guidelines to address the needs of volunteer services.